

Memorandum

To: Advisory Committee on Legislative Space Allocation and Design

Sen. Joe Stegner, Co-chair	Rep. Lawrence Denney, Co-chair
Sen. Robert Geddes	Rep. Bill Deal
Sen. Dean Cameron	Rep. Max Black
Sen. Clint Stennett	Rep. Wendy Jaquet

From: Jeff Youtz and Eric Milstead, Legislative Services Office

Date: April 7, 2006

Re: Recap of April 4, 2006 meeting

The Advisory Committee to Provide Legislative Space Allocation and Design Recommendations to the Capitol Commission held its first organizational meeting on April 4, 2006 in the JFAC conference room to discuss timelines, meeting dates and general design and space allocation topics. This memorandum recaps the discussion and summarizes the general themes that emerged during the meeting which will be part of the ongoing dialogue with Paul Brown, the project consultant.

- What floor in the new wings should committee rooms be located—1st or 2nd floor?

General discussion indicated a preference for location on lower floors to take advantage of excavating sloped seating, wide hallways for public convenience and safety, and upper floor light considerations for any year around office locations.

- Auditorium-style hearing rooms?

Along with discussion about two auditorium style hearing rooms in each wing was a discussion about whether one auditorium style hearing room would suffice for the needs of the Legislature and where that room could best be located. Engineering challenges aside, there seemed to be interest for a central location for that large hearing room, which would mean excavating space for that auditorium directly under the central rotunda area or closely adjacent thereto. This would solve other space challenges in the wings if this concept were workable.

- Will committee chairmen and secretary offices be located in the Statehouse or in the wings and adjacent to hearing rooms?

General discussion recognized the advantages for committee chairs and particularly committee secretaries, to be located adjacent to or near the hearing rooms. However, there was also a discussion about the role of the new hearing rooms. Perhaps the hearing rooms themselves could be less identified with germane area (i.e.; the Rev & Tax room), and instead be named after Idaho Governors or lakes or mountains; and could be scheduled or assigned with some flexibility allowing for subject matter and expected crowd size. The number and size of committees also could change in the future which needs to be taken in to account.

- Food service issues:
 - Where should food service and dining rooms be located—in the wings or in the Capitol?

General discussion indicated a preference for food service to be located in the wings. However, in the event the full-service dining facility is located in the wings, there should be “lighter fare” (light meals, snacks & beverages) available to Legislators only, and in close proximity to the chambers (perhaps converting existing caucus rooms to lounges.)

- Should there be a separate food service for each house?

Thoughts were expressed which indicated that one food service provider could handle the delivery of services for both houses, although there were some advantages to each house having a separate dining area for Legislators only. There was also some support expressed for a common public cafeteria area and also support for a “public gathering room” which could be reserved, and which would have catering/food service capability.

- Should space be provided for the press/lobbyists? If so, where--in the Statehouse or wings?

There seemed to be some recognition that space should be provided to lobbyists and the press, although it was clear that Legislator and Legislative staff space is a much higher priority and should be accommodated first. One comment included an observation that premium (and limited) Capitol Building space on the 4th floor used by lobbyists is an inappropriate use of that space.

- Concerns were raised about space allocation for staff—where is the best place for LSO staff in terms of coordination among staff, coordination between the legislature and staff, and to accommodate future growth. These same concerns were raised in terms of leadership staff.

There was a clear concern expressed about the need for allowing for future growth of Legislative staff, both in the context of the existing staff structure of LSO and Leadership staff but also for future staff needs, such as the possibility of germane committees having their own staff or even individual legislators with constituent service staff. Designing the office space in the wings therefore, should allow for flexibility for future growth and reprogramming of space (temporary walls?). There was also consensus about wanting staff functions to remain in the Capitol Building and/or the atrium wings. A specific observation by one committee member indicated that the only room for growth for JFAC (offices, conference rooms) was to go vertical, converting the Gold Room space and opposite side to conference rooms and or/chairman/secretary offices with small connecting (legislator/staff only) stairway to existing work areas. That specific 4th floor space, the Gold/Silver Room areas, only have one entrance, so are inappropriate as public hearing areas.

- What space can best function as caucus rooms?

Comments indicated that the caucus rooms must be on the 3rd or 4th floors of the Statehouse. Discussion seemed to indicate that the existing 4th floor hearing rooms (perhaps expanded or redesigned) represent one workable option as caucus rooms. Additional discussion ensued about the need for other smaller, subtle, private meeting areas (like the small Senate room adjacent to the lunchroom).

- Should all members of the House and Senate have an office or workspace in the Capitol Building or in the atrium wings?

Space in the Capitol Building or the atrium wings should provide an individual office or workspace for every member of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Workspaces currently provided in the basement of the JR Williams Building across the street simply are not used because of the inconvenience of distance.

- Where is the best location for an adequately-sized gift shop?

Discussion seemed to support the need and importance of this function to promote Idaho and possibly act as a central tourist welcome area. The

location should be strategically and conveniently located in terms of public access and should also be near a public information center of some kind.

- How will the Atrium Wings and Capitol Building be seamlessly integrated?

This discussion developed into one of the most important themes of the meeting and the committee members all emphasized the importance that the design considerations be driven by integration of the Capitol Building and the wings. Related discussions included how the new high-speed elevators would be used (for Legislators and staff?) and where will they be located (internally which would displace some current offices); how will the existing public access elevators be configured? (presumably expanded and also high speed for public use); and how would those public elevators be integrated into the public access flow to the wings? Other discussion ensued regarding other public access points to the wings; and some type of grand staircase transition from the Capitol Bldg to the wings.

- How will the basement level under the rotunda be used?

Is it possible to reconfigure this space (or reconfigure closely adjoining space) to provide a large auditorium-style hearing room as mentioned in an earlier discussion item or, alternatively, could such reconfigured space be used as a multi-purpose room (per the Texas model...?)

Recap of discussions:

While the Advisory Committee discussed a number of specific matters of interest (noted above) the general tenor of the discussion emphasized the following themes:

- Whatever changes are forthcoming, the Statehouse must remain a working Capitol.
- Whatever changes and improvements are made must be done in a manner that facilitates public access and involvement in the legislative process. That is, access to hearing rooms and the transition between the Statehouse and wings must be as seamless as possible.

The meeting concluded with the Committee scheduling two additional meetings to be held in the Statehouse with project consultant Paul Brown, of 3DI Engineers. The first meeting will be on Friday, April 28th, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm; and the second meeting will be on Friday, May 19, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. The committee felt that a Capitol Building "walk around" would be beneficial at the first meeting on April 28th, from 9:00 am to about 11:00 am. More information will be forthcoming.

